


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 30, 2005

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATION TO THE VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES FOR ALEXANDRIA
ARCHAEOLOGY

ISSUE: City Council consideration of an 18-month grant application (January 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007) to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) Survey and Planning Cost Share Program in the amount of \$40,000 for Office of Historic Alexandria/Alexandria Archaeology.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Approve the submission of the grant application to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) for a cost-share project in the amount of \$40,000 that would result in the creation of GIS layers as a part of the Alexandria Archaeology Digital Atlas project; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all documents that may be required.

BACKGROUND: The State Survey and Planning Cost Share Program funds projects which address historic resources through identification, documentation, evaluation, and preservation planning activities consistent with responsible site stewardship of historic resources. Costs for the project are shared between VDHR and a local government or regional planning district commission. VDHR manages the project and covers 50 percent of the project costs. This proposal is for an 18-month funding period.

DISCUSSION: Alexandria Archaeology and Virginia Tech's Center for Geospatial Technology (CGIT) began working together in April 2005 to develop the Alexandria Archaeology Digital Atlas. This project will greatly enhance the City's archaeological resource protection review process, and will allow sharing of data through the City's GIS system. The goals of the Digital Atlas project are to use GIS interactive mapping technology to enhance the City's preservation planning process, and to bring history and archaeology to the public through the City's website. The first phase of the project, now ongoing and funded by the City and the Historic Alexandria Foundation, is a pilot to develop the process required to translate three formats into overlay maps

with associated databases, compatible with the City's GIS system. These include historic maps, aerial photographic surveys, and maps of historic resources created by Alexandria Archaeology staff. This work draws on historic and interpretive maps and data, which have been compiled by Alexandria Archaeology over the last 26 years. This work was originally initiated by VDHR funding for the Alexandria Regional Preservation Office in 1979. Virginia Tech/CGIT has also applied to the National Endowment for the Humanities for further work on this project, which will benefit the City and the work of Alexandria Archaeology.

The first phase of the project is concentrating on resources outside of Old Town. The proposed phase will concentrate on historic and archaeological resources in the Old Town area. This second phase will begin to convert the Old Town information into a geospatially enabled environment, capturing both the location of the resource and associated historical documents, photographs, and other data associated with these locations. This process will result in two products: the addition of historical layers, or themes, to the Alexandria Archaeology Digital Atlas, making this information readily available to all individuals involved in the preservation of resources in Alexandria; and a series of small web applications that will allow the public to browse selected resources through a map interface of Old Town for a specific time period (such as the Civil War), or to see the change in a theme over time (such as sites related to African American heritage). The completed layers and associated databases will reside on the City's GIS system, and the web application will reside on the City's website, in coordination with the City GIS team.

If the City is awarded Cost Share funds, Virginia Tech's Center for Geospatial Technology will be contracted by VDHR to conduct specified work for the Alexandria project. The Cost Share Coordinator for VDHR has indicated that they can contract directly with Virginia Tech because it is a State university.

FISCAL IMPACT: None. VDHR would pay \$20,000 (50% of the proposed Cost Share Project amount of \$40,000) directly to Virginia Tech. The match of \$20,000 would include monies already allocated for the Digital Atlas project (\$3,749 remaining on a prior Virginia Tech purchase order and \$5,000 which will be paid directly by the Historic Alexandria Foundation to Virginia Tech) and a contribution by Virginia Tech of \$11,251 for the project director's staff time. In addition, the City will contribute \$6,881 of in-kind services, consisting of Alexandria Archaeology staff time devoted to this project. This cost share arrangement has been discussed and approved in concept by the Cost Share Program Coordinator for VDHR.

STAFF:

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